

**\$10M awarded to IRIC for the development of new cancer-fighting drugs
and immunotherapies**

Montreal, June 4, 2019 – The Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer (IRIC) of the Université de Montréal (UdeM) has been awarded a 10-million dollar grant from the government of Quebec's *Fonds d'accélération des collaborations en santé* (FACS), to develop new cancer-fighting drugs in collaboration with biopharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb and collaborators from seven academic research centres from Quebec and abroad. This major announcement was made today by Mr. Pierre Fitzgibbon, Minister of Economy and Innovation, on the occasion of the opening of the Quebec Pavilion at the BIO International Convention, held in Philadelphia June 3-6, 2019.

Financial support that provides hope

Entrusted with transforming, whenever possible, academic research into therapeutic solutions that will benefit patients, IRIC has joined with industry partners to pursue, over the next four years, a series of projects aimed at turning research efforts into therapeutic solutions that are accessible to patients. The program developed with Bristol-Myers Squibb is built on a portfolio of four oncology and cardiovascular disease projects based on innovative drug discovery concepts. They include developing drugs to reduce the side effects of treatments, using the immune system to vanquish cancer and the advancement of precision therapy to increase the effectiveness of the treatments offered.

"This great news once again confirms IRIC's vision and the relevance of our drug development model. It is recognition of the results stemming from the cutting-edge discoveries, technologies, and know-how of our institute's Investigators. It also perfectly illustrates the key role that fundamental research plays in making therapeutic solutions accessible for the benefit of patients", said Michel Bouvier, Project Director, CEO and Principal Investigator at IRIC.

By presenting cancer, immunotherapy and drug discovery research projects in collaboration with the biopharmaceutical community and seven Quebec academic research centres, IRIC fully met the objectives set by the FACS aimed at fostering collaborations between the players involved in the life sciences ecosystem. Among them, Michel Bouvier, Anne Marinier, Dr. Guy Sauvageau, Sylvain Meloche, Investigators at IRIC, Dr. Marc Bilodeau, Investigator at the *CRCHUM*, Dr. Frédéric Barabé, Investigator at the *Centre de recherche du CHUL*, Yoshua Bengio, founder of MILA, Dr. Nada Jabado, Investigator at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, Morag Park, Investigator at the Rosalind and

Morris Goodman Cancer Research Centre of McGill University and Richard Leduc, Investigator at the *Centre de recherche du CHUS*.

Through this initiative, the government of Quebec is banking on their individual strengths to bolster research excellence and ensure the international acclaim of Quebec as an innovative province in the field of life sciences.

"Implementing a program of collaboration between the public and private sector creates synergies that the health sector, and later the patients, will benefit from. We are delighted about this initiative", pointed out Robert Tessier, Chairman of the Board of the *Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec* and Chairman of the Board, IRIC.

"It gives me great pleasure to underline this invaluable support that will enhance the excellence of the Quebec research network and that commends the efforts made on a daily basis by IRIC to find solutions to the scourge that now affects one in two Canadians", said Marie-Josée Hébert, Vice-Rector of Research, Discovery, Creation and Innovation at the Université de Montréal.

Through the *Fonds d'accélération des collaborations en santé*, the government of Quebec is making a long-term investment and reasserting its eagerness to support the cycle from academic research to drug discovery. It also underscores its desire to highlight research infrastructures and thereby guarantee the efficacy of the healthcare system and maximize the economic spinoffs for Quebec and the field of health sciences.

About the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer (IRIC) of the Université de Montréal

An ultra-modern research hub and training centre located in the heart of the Université de Montréal, the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer of the Université de Montréal was created in 2003 to shed light on the mechanisms of cancer and discover new, more effective therapies to counter this disease. The IRIC operates according to a model that is unique in Canada. Its innovative approach to research has already led to discoveries that will, over the coming years, have a significant impact on the fight against cancer. For more information: iric.ca

Consult our virtual press kit: <https://www.iric.ca/overview/#MN-00>

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